

# CDP Alumnus

Center for Domestic Preparedness — Anniston, AL

## Alabama responders take on the CDP Integrated Capstone Event

DC Firefighters learn to combat protester devices

Calif. National Guard trains for CERF-P mission

CDP employee celebrates 1,000th COBRA entry



# FEMA

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## CDP Mission

The CDP develops and delivers training for emergency response providers from state, local and tribal governments and when appropriate the federal government, foreign governments and private entities.

## CDP Vision

An emergency response community prepared for and capable of responding to all-hazards events.

## CDP Training Tally

868,505 as of March 21, 2015

## Cost

Training at the CDP campus is federally funded at no cost to state, local and tribal emergency response professionals or their agency. All tuition, lodging, meals and transportation are covered.

Training focuses on incident management, mass casualty response and emergency response to a catastrophic natural or man-made disaster. For more information or to register for CDP specialized programs or courses, please visit our web site at <http://cdp.dhs.gov>

Cover photo: An Alabama responder triages a role player during the Integrated Capstone Event. The CDP employs role players with disabilities to add even more realism to the training. Photo by Gabriela Mleczo

# Responders from across Alabama come together for advanced training at CDP

Amid a cacophony of wailing sirens and the anguished cries of the wounded, John Davis, Jr. stands in a white decontamination tent in the hospital parking lot, trying to cut away the clothing from a man who was injured in a "terrorist attack" and may have been exposed to Sarin gas. It's not an easy task. His plastic personal protective suit hood limits his vision and the rubber gloves make something as simple as using a pair of scissors difficult.

Davis, a Fairhope resident, is one of more than 100

Alabama responders who participated in training the week of Feb. 7 at the CDP.

The responders include physicians, nurses, public health officials and emergency medical services specialists who came to the CDP to learn through hands-on training about mass casualty and disaster response.

"It's a little overwhelming, but I think that's par for the course," said Davis, a member of the Emergency Preparedness

Team and a senior environmentalist with the Alabama



A student assesses a survivor at the decontamination site set up outside of the hospital during the Feb. 13 Integrated Capstone Event.



JoAnne Ray, an emergency department charge nurse from Guntersville, Ala., and John Coffey, a safety specialist and emergency and disaster preparedness coordinator with Saint Vincent's Medical Center in Jacksonville, Fla., treat a seriously injured "patient" in the Noble Training Facility Emergency Department.

(Photos by Gabriela Mleczo, FEMA Corps Team Summit Four)

Department of Public Health.

During the week, the students took one of three courses that were specific to their professions. The students spent the first four days of training in their disparate courses, Healthcare Leadership for Mass Casualty Incidents (HCL), Hospital Emergency Response Training for Mass Casualty Incidents (HERT) or Emergency Medical Operations for CBRNE Incidents (EMO).

"I hoped to get more knowledge on how to handle a disaster, if it were to happen in our community," said Donna Muckerson, an Infection Prevention Team Leader/Registered Nurse at Southeast Alabama Medical

Continued on next page

Center in Dothan, Ala. “Being an Infectious Control Nurse, you never know what’s going to happen. A disaster doesn’t have to be a plane crash. It could be a smallpox outbreak; measles is a big concern right now, especially since cases have been reported in Atlanta.” Muckerson took the four-day HCL course in which she learned more about the dynamics involved in the decision-making process during an all-hazards disaster involving mass casualties.

The individual courses ran through Thursday. Then, on Friday, the responders put all of their training to the test during a mass casualty exercise, known as the Integrated Capstone Event (ICE).

The ICE is a hands-on mass casualty exercise. This particular exercise began with a terrorist group setting off bombs laced with Sarin gas in a subway. The EMTs first encountered the survivors on a dark, smoke-filled street scattered with debris. The students triaged, treated and transported the survivors to the hospital. In the exercise, the survivors are portrayed by role players, as well as human patient simulators (sophisticated robotic mannequins) and regular mannequins.

The students didn’t have to improvise when it came to the training venues. In fact, the CDP has the only hospital in the nation that is dedicated solely to training. More than 20,000 healthcare professionals have trained at that facility since the hospital was added to the CDP campus in 2007.

At the hospital, other students either treated survivors in the Emergency

Department or managed communications, logistics and operations in the hospital’s emergency operations center.

“This training will definitely help me relate more to situations like hospitals being overwhelmed with patients following a disaster,” Davis said.

Martha “Marti” Smith, a registered nurse who took the HCL course, found the opportunity to train with other healthcare professionals to be a perk. “It’s been great to talk with other Alabama responders, as well as responders from other states,” said Smith, who serves as the Infection Prevention Employee Health Manager at the Cullman

(Ala.) Regional Medical Center. “And, of course, we’ve been able to network and talk about what [response capabilities] we have.”

By the end of the exercise, the students were exhausted from physical exertion and the adrenaline spike that had long since faded. They had lost a few patients. Luckily, they were able to save a lot more. But, the real success will be measured at a later date in cities and towns across Alabama where – if and when disaster strikes – they will use the skills they learned this week to save real lives.

***“This training will definitely help me relate more to situations like hospitals being overwhelmed with patients following a disaster”***

**John Davis, Jr.,  
Alabama Dept. of Public Health**



Healthcare personnel decontaminate a “survivor” of a terrorist attack during the Integrated Capstone Event (ICE), Feb. 13. The ICE combines multiple courses in a final culminating exercise that promotes an interdisciplinary response to a mass casualty incident. Students from the Healthcare Leadership for Mass Casualty Incidents, Hospital Emergency Response to Mass Casualty Incidents and Emergency Medical Operations for CBRNE Incidents all participated in this exercise.

“In the past, maybe we’ve relied a lot on Federal intervention,” said Lori McGrath, a nurse practitioner at the Cullman (Ala.) Regional Medical Center. McGrath also serves as a member of a Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT), a group of healthcare professionals who deploy to provide medical care during disasters. “This [training] has greatly empowered the local level to be able to respond and take care of ourselves, at least for the first day or two. It may take 24 hours for a DMAT team to respond. In those 24 hours, a lot of damage can happen... or a lot of good can happen, if the community is prepared.”



# Calif. National Guard trains on HAZMAT skills

Soldiers assigned to the California National Guard's 149<sup>th</sup> Chemical Company deployed to train at the CDP for two weeks in January, training that helped them to better prepare for both their military mission and their civil support mission.

As part of their civil support mission, the 149<sup>th</sup>'s soldiers are members of the CBRNE-Enhanced Response Force Package (CERF-P). The CERF-P team is part of the Federal response team that falls under the National Guard Bureau and works with the various FEMA regional offices, explained Staff Sgt. John Austin, the noncommissioned officer in charge.

The soldiers took both the Emergency Responder Hazardous Materials Technician for CBRNE Incidents course (ERHM) and the Hazardous Materials Technician for CBRNE Incidents course (HT), both of which will help them in their military and civil support duties.

In the five-day ERHM course, the soldiers received hands-on training in identifying hazardous materials, using advanced surveying and monitoring equipment. They also learned to perform decontamination procedures, all of which helped to prepare them for the ProBoard exam.

"On the military side of it, this brings us about 95 percent complete with our certifications," explained Sgt.



CDP instructor Doug Varner instructs California National Guard soldiers on how to use the Ludlum 2241-3 radiation detector in the Hazardous Materials Technician for CBRNE Incidents (HT) course. The HT course was the second course the 149<sup>th</sup> Chemical Company soldiers took at the CDP this year. During their first week, they took the Emergency Responder Hazardous Materials Technician for CBRNE Incidents (ERHM) course.

Sara Brown, who serves as the unit's training, logistical and administrative specialist for their CERF-P mission. Brown explained that their proficiency levels go from the awareness- to operator- to technician-level. "Technician is the highest level that we can get. This training helps us to prepare for our ProBoard certifications. So aside from a couple of individual requirements, this is all the training we need."

Brown and her fellow soldiers took the ProBoard exam through the Alabama Fire College the end of their first week of training. "The class helped with a portion of the test, but we had to go research some of it on our own." Brown, a Sonora, Calif. native, is a return CDP student. She took the CDP's Respiratory Protection: Program Development and Administration course last year.

During their second week of training, in the five-day HT course, the soldiers participated in hands-on training that taught them to respond to incidents involving a chemical, biological or radiological incident, as well as to extricate and decontaminate survivors of such an incident. The soldiers finished off their fast-paced training week by testing their skills in the Chemical, Ordnance,



Left: Staff Sgt. John Austin, of the 149<sup>th</sup> Chemical Company, takes a break along side some of the personal protective equipment used in the ERHM course.

Biological, and Radiological Training Facility (COBRATF), the nation's only toxic-chemical training facility dedicated solely to training the nation's emergency responders. The HT course helped the soldiers prepare for their civil support mission, according to Spc. Michael Garber, the load-out and maintenance specialist for the unit's CERF-P mission.

"This course is really in-depth with the monitoring for radiological sources and gases," Garber, a Stockton, Calif., native, explained. "It really focused on why we do it. This training will really help us to perform our mission."

"For many of us, this is a really in-depth refresher. Some of these soldiers have not been to training in five years, so the practical applications are a good hands-on refresher."

"We are always told 'This is how you do it,' but not so much 'This is why and this is what to look for,' Brown explained. "So this training is very beneficial in those aspects."

For Austin, the senior noncommissioned officer in the group, this is his first CDP course; however, he trained at the some of the CDP's facilities before. Austin joined the Army after completing ROTC. In 1987, he trained at the U.S. Army Chemical Defense Training Facility, that is now the CDP's COBRATF.

While Austin, also a Stockton native, will retire from the Army soon, he said the training will benefit him in his civilian job, as well. Austin serves as the Senior Emergency Planner for the San Joaquin County (Calif.) Office of Emergency Services. He has also worked as a hazardous materials specialist.

"Because I was a HAZMAT specialist, I have been involved in many different types of HAZMAT situations from waste oil spills on down," he said. "Just in my county alone, we have lots of opportunities for HAZMAT materials incidents: interstates, railroads and



Left: Instructor Frazier Sloan instructs a small group of students during the Hazardous Materials Technician for CBRNE Incidents (HT) course.



CDP instructor, Frazier Sloan, walks Staff Sgt. Vernon Trozzi through using the scintillation detector on the Ludlum radiation meter during the Hazardous Materials Technician for CBRNE Incidents (HT) course. The CDP offers more than 10 HAZMAT courses.

an inland seaport. We also have a chlorine facility and an anhydrous ammonia storage facility."

Brown, looking at CDP classes from her role as the unit's training specialist, was already thinking of other CDP courses that would benefit her unit and other units.

"I would absolutely recommend CDP training," she said. "The CDP has a bunch of different courses here. So, depending on what the unit's specific mission is, I'm sure they would find a course that's beneficial to the unit as a whole."

Garber, who has taken other CDP courses, said the CDP is a good environment for their training.

"The [CDP] teachers having the experience," Garber said. "There's a difference between a teacher who's taught stuff, but who hasn't actually done it in a real-world application. I'm pretty sure all of our instructors have been through it all in the real world numerous times. They take their personal experiences and integrate it into their teaching to make it an enjoyable class."

Under Title 32 (state support) mission, National Guard soldiers and airmen are eligible to attend fully funded training at the CDP. The Department of Homeland Security funds the training, the student's travel, lodging and meals.



# Network, get CDP news on LinkedIn

The Center for Domestic Preparedness kicked off the new year with its new CDP LinkedIn account, a platform for emergency responders and training officers to get the latest news on new courses and CDP training and – of course – network.

The CDP's primary mission is to train state, local and tribal emergency response providers, as well as the Federal government, foreign governments, and private entities, as available. A popular aspect of the courses is the hands-on training with a multi-disciplined audience. In addition, the CDP is the only civilian facility that trains with toxic chemical and live biological agents. The center also has the only hospital facility in the United States dedicated solely to training hospital and healthcare professionals in disaster preparedness and response.

The CDP's LinkedIn account includes announcements and information about upcoming courses and class seat availability; links to photos and videos of the CDP's hands-on training; a forum for potential students to ask questions prior to training at the CDP; and a place to connect with CDP instructors and alumni.

"The CDP has trained more than 850,000 students in our resident, non-resident and train-the-trainer courses," said CDP Superintendent Mike King. "All of our courses are

relevant, realistic and advanced. We strive to provide training that most departments cannot offer through their local and state training programs. A significant benefit of attending one of our resident training programs is the opportunity to network and exchange ideas with other responders from across the country and, sometimes, with responders from other countries. CDP's LinkedIn account will give

students another forum on which to learn about CDP training, get answers to any questions they may have and to expand their

professional networks way beyond the walls of their classroom."

The CDP has more than 2,000 connections and is adding more connections everyday. You can connect with the CDP on LinkedIn by going to the LinkedIn website ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)) and typing in "Center for Domestic Preparedness."

The CDP regularly posts news and information on its other social media platforms and its website:

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/cdpfema](http://www.facebook.com/cdpfema)

**Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/cdpfema](http://www.twitter.com/cdpfema)

**CDP Website:** <http://cdp.dhs.gov>



# Registering for CDP training is as easy as clicking a mouse

Advanced, hands-on training for emergency responders is only a few mouse clicks away.

The CDP's new online registration makes it even easier for state, local and tribal responders to sign up for fully funded training.

The new online registration process simplifies admission steps, decreases paperwork and automates the approval process for responders to take any of the more than 40 advanced, hands-on training classes the CDP offers, according to Chuck Medley, CDP Assistant Director for Training Delivery.

The new online application process replaces the six-step process responders had to complete to sign up for CDP training.

"This is an upgrade to the current enrollment process that required first responders to complete paper documents and route them through their chain of command for approval," Medley explained. "The new application process allows students to complete all documents electronically. The system notifies their supervisor and state training officer who can approve the training request through the Internet and expedite their attendance."

Online registration is available to all students who are signing up for resident CDP training. Online registration will be available later this year for responders signing up for non-resident and indirect training.

For more information on CDP training or to register for resident training, visit <http://cdp.dhs.gov>.



# CDP employee sets record with 1,000th entry into COBRA 'Hot Zone'

**T**ina Reddick pulls on a camouflage chemical protective suit, pulls on butyl rubber boots and gloves and then – for the finishing touch – dons an M40A1 protective mask and steps into a room where emergency responders are training with toxic nerve agents. Depending on what day it is, she'll be in a training venue where responders are training with GB (Sarin) or VX nerve agent. On another day, she may be with responders who are training with ricin or anthrax.

At the CDP's Chemical, Ordnance, Biological and Radiological Training Facility (COBRATF) where Reddick has worked as a contract employee for the better part of 13 years, these training venues are referred to as the "Hot Zone". For Reddick, working in the COBRATF's "Hot Zone" is just another day at the office. In fact, on Jan. 2, Reddick became the first CDP employee to achieve 1,000 entries into the COBRATF's "Hot Zone".

"It's just exciting," Reddick said, speaking of her work. "It's so different because it's the only place in the country that we do this type of training, so it makes it much more special and exciting."

The CDP provides all-hazards, hands-on training to help civilian responders prepare for mass casualty incidents caused by acts of terrorism or natural disasters.

Several CDP courses include training in the COBRA Training Facility, where responders engage in scenario-based exercises that require critical-thinking skills related to the selection and use of Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive (CBRNE) detection and sampling instruments.

"The COBRATF is the only facility in the nation that offers state, local, tribal, and territorial emergency responders a hands-on training experience with toxic nerve agents," explained Gary Milner, Assistant Director of the COBRATF. "The result is overwhelmingly increased confidence that they can respond to and survive a chemical or all-hazards environment by trusting their

personal protective equipment and operational practices."

Each time Reddick enters the "Hot Zone," she spends at least three hours in full protective gear in and around lethal doses of nerve agent. A full-time employee working 40 hours a week, logs about 2,080 work hours a year. For Tina, this means she has spent about a year and a half of her work life in personal protective equipment in an environment with nerve agent. During a typical training session, Reddick will dispense enough lethal doses of chemical agent to generate a massive number of casualties in an unprotected setting. It's no wonder that, looking back, Reddick, an Anniston native, said she had some trepidation about working at the COBRATF.

COBRA students range from emergency managers and police officers to hazardous material technicians. To date, more than 50,000 responders have trained in the COBRATF's

Hot Zone, including several Boston police officers who responded to the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. The officers had just attended the training the year before. One of the officers spoke at the CDP's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and shared with the CDP staff how grateful he and his fellow officers were to have had the training when they responded to the scene of the bombing.

"To know that this place offers that type of comfort and support to the nation – and to know I play a part in that – it's awesome," Reddick said.



Tina Reddick, a training operation specialist made her 1,000th entry into the COBRA "Hot Zone" in January.



# DC Firefighters train on Field Force extrication techniques

Eight Washington, D.C. firefighters found themselves surrounded by police officers when they came to the CDP to train on Field Force Extrication techniques (FFE) the week of Jan. 19.

FFE is a three-day course that provides emergency responders with the knowledge and skills regarding the tools and information needed to extricate an individual safely from a protestor device. Traditionally, mostly law enforcement officers take the course, but for this particular class, the students included both police officers and firefighters.

"I didn't realize this was such a law enforcement-oriented course when I signed up for it," said D.C. Firefighter, Sgt. Oleg Pelekhaty, but he and his fellow firefighters have no regrets about taking the class. "We definitely have a lot of interactions with protestor devices in the DC area. We're hoping some of the stuff we pick up here, we can bring back and incorporate into our operations, maybe get some new techniques and approaches."

During the course, the students learn to recognize the purpose of protestor devices and the various types of locking protestor devices



Above and bottom left: Students in the Field Force Extrication Techniques learn to use jackhammers to extricate protestors from devices.

used in civil actions. They also learn through hands-on training how to operate the tools used to safely extricate an individual from protestor devices.

Pelekhaty serves as one of the department's "Fill-in Officers." He's assigned to Truck Company 6, Platoon # 3 in the Columbia Heights area. Each DC firefighting platoon is made up of firefighters, technicians who drive the fire trucks, officers and chiefs, he explained. Each company has three lieutenants and a captain, the trucks and squads have sergeants. His job is to fill-in whenever one of the battalion's officer's takes leave or is out sick. Its work he loves, but "you practically live out of your

car and bounce around," he joked. Pelekhaty coordinated the training for himself and his fellow firefighters.

"I did not know about this training until Sgt. Pelekhaty brought it up," said Pvt. Raymond Edwards, who is assigned to the D.C. Fire Training Division. Although Edwards didn't know what to expect, he was pleasantly surprised by the diverse experience of the FFE instructors.

"I like seeing that the instructors are from all over," Edwards said. "It's not just one instructor from one area. They are from everywhere and they all have their own [response] stories. We've heard four different stories from four different instructors, which is great!"

Pelekhaty said in DC protests are pretty





Above: D.C. Firefighter, Lt. Ron Kemp, saws through an obstacle commonly used to make protestor devices.

Below: D.C. Firefighter, Sgt. Oleg Pelekhaty (center), and other students receive a safety briefing before learning to use the power tools in the FFE course.



Students in the Field Force Extrication Techniques course learn to safely use various power tools to extricate protestors.

much daily events and most of them are carried out without any incidents, but not all. He described a recent protestor incident to which he responded:

“Six or seven Greenpeace protestors climbed up on a crane before the start of work for the morning. They went out and rappelled down the crane with a big banner and were hanging from the banner. A couple of the protestors had chained themselves to the crane,” he said. “The crane operator comes to work. He’s climbing into the cab, runs into one of these guys and about has a heart attack.” In another incident, DC firefighters were called upon when a “hemp activist” set up outside of the White House in a cage. Pelekhaty said firefighters had to use a rotary saw to cut the activist out of the cage.

“It’s very relevant for us because we’re the Nation’s capital,” said Lt. Ron Kemp. Kemp is a member of DC Fire’s Rescue Squad 1, which is part of the department’s Special Operations

Battalion. The Special Ops Battalion is comprised of five companies. They are tasked with all the technical rescues, the hazardous material responses and – when it comes to fires – the rescue squads’ only job is to search for victims while the engine and truck companies are manning hoses and ladders.

“We’re no strangers to protestors,” Kemp said, a 23-year veteran of the department. “We just had a protest around our firehouse. They were protesting what was happening in Ferguson [Mo.]” Kemp said the department even had a plan in place for the time when the Washington Monument was encased in scaffolding, while work crews repaired damages incurred during the earthquake. “We have to think about anything that they can climb.”

Pelekhaty’s currently working with the CDP staff about taking the FFE course on the road to Washington, D.C. so that the entire Special Ops Battalion can attend the training.



# Coast Guard crew medevacs ‘patient’ during ICE

An added dash of realism landed in the midst of a recent CDP Integrated Capstone Event (ICE) courtesy of the U.S. Coast Guard.

A U.S. Coast Guard helicopter crew assigned to Aviation Training Center, Mobile (Ala.) flew to the CDP, landing on the Noble Training Facility helipad where they picked up and transported a severely injured “patient.”

“Having fellow Department of Homeland Security agency involvement, like the inclusion of a Coast Guard Helicopter, adds realism to our mass casualty exercises and is a great example of the ‘all-in’ effort of the Federal Government during response operations,” said Grant Bissey, a CDP Training Specialist who oversees the ICE exercises.

In addition to the dash of realism, adding the USCG helicopter and crew to the ICE provided

lessons learned for both the Coast Guard and the CDP, Bissey said.

“[This] was the first time the Incident Response radio architecture’s interoperable capabilities had been utilized for actual mission communication using the Coast Guard Aviation Radios and the CDP’s P25 Harris Radio system,” Bissey explained. “We were able to communicate clearly with the helicopter [while it was] on the ground at the Anniston Airport from the CDP (a distance of more than 10 miles) using a hand-held radio.”

The thump of helicopter blades is a sound effect the CDP technicians sometimes play during ICE events to simulate a medevac helicopter landing. During the Nov. 21 ICE, the distinctive sound of thumping helicopter blades were real as the Coast Guard crew flew in and then simulated actions they would take during a real disaster:

Receiving and medevacing a severely injured “patient” during the exercise.

“[This] was an excellent opportunity for us to get to know our [Department of Homeland Security] partners, as well as gain a better appreciation of what part we’d play in response to a domestic terrorism event in Alabama,” said Lt. Cmdr. Brooks Crawford, one of the pilots of the MH-60T helicopter that participated in the exercise. “Additionally, we were able to demonstrate some of our capabilities and limitations.

“Our crew thoroughly enjoyed the event and we look forward to working with the CDP again in the future,” Crawford added. Along with Crawford, the other Coast Guard crewmembers who participated are Lt. Cmdr. David McCown and Petty Officer Justin Freeburg.

“It was great to have the Coast Guard participate in our Integrated Capstone Event,” Bissey said.

*Below: The U.S. Coast Guard helicopter crew members carry a “patient” to the waiting helicopter.*

*Below Right: Coast Guard helicopter crew members load an injured “patient,” played by role player, Raymond Roseberry, on the MH-60T helicopter. The Coast Guard crew are assigned to the Aviation Training Center, Mobile (Ala.).*





# Worth Repeating



Lt. Thomas Colvin  
Dive Team Leader  
Portage (Ind.) Fire Department

“All the incident command information that I’m acquiring will help me make better decisions and be able to tap into resources around my area more effectively to make sure we come to better conclusions on any of our incident scenes.”



Mary Dorn  
Public Health Manager & Health Officer  
Outagamie County (Wisc.)  
Health and Human Services

“It’s been very interesting to train in such unique facilities where we as public health professionals can train along with our healthcare responders.”

Rachel Fujii  
Emergency Dept. Manager  
Kaiser Permanente  
Santa Rosa, Calif.

“[We] were super-excited about this amazing resource that’s available to us. We wanted to bring back [what we learned] and get organized at home.”



Sgt. Oleg Pelekhaty  
Fill-in Officer  
District of Columbia Fire  
Department

“We’re hoping some of the stuff we [learn here] we can bring back home and incorporate into our operations, maybe get some new techniques and approaches to use.”

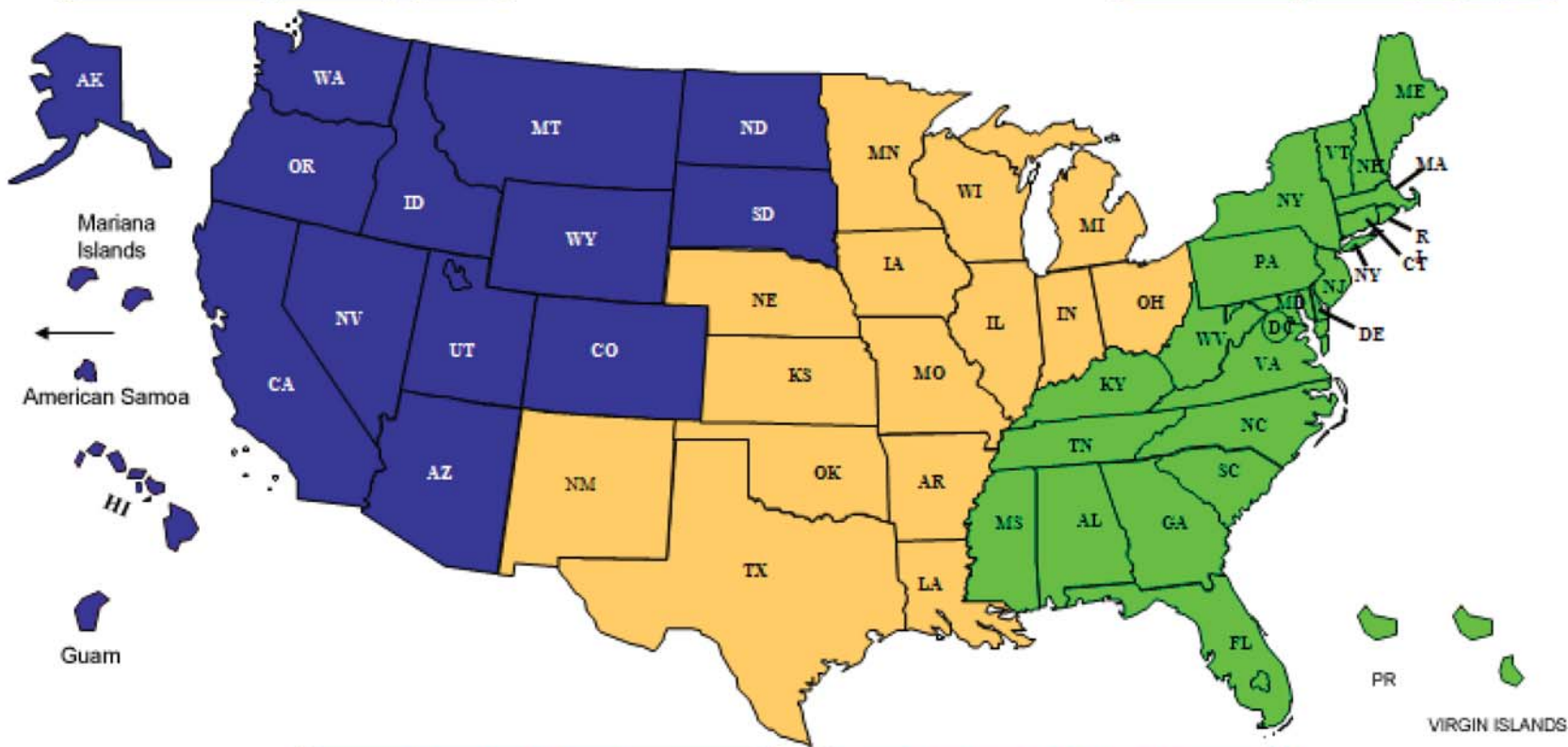




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# CDP Region Map

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